SHRI A. RAJA: Sir, there are prescribed guidelines contemplated in the Forest Conservation Act itself; they are not discretionery. There is a technical committee by the name Forest Advisory Committee. That Committee scrutinises the projects that are proposed before it. Necessary scientific and technical advice is sought, of course, provided in the Act itself, as to what activities could be permitted for development purposes. For example, on any road, a bridle path that is available in the forest itself could be strengthened without tar taping. If you require a tar taping, then environmental clearance under the Environment Protection Act needs to be obtained.

Thus, there are some established procedures. These are no questions of discretion. Once the State Government adopts the established procedures, we are ready to give the clearance.

*445. [The questioner (Shri Ekanath K. Thakur) was absent. For answer *vide* page 37 *infra*.]

Gauge conversion of Madurai-Dindigul rail line

*446. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that for the nine on-going gauge conversion projects in the southern zone Rs. 500.00 crores were needed but the amount sanctioned was only Rs. 125.00 crores;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Madurai-Dindigual metre-gauge line has to be converted in view of increase in traffic; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b) As per the Budget 2005-06, 10 gauge conversion projects are in progress in Southern Railway. Out of this, 3 gauge conversion projects have already been completed and remaining 7 projects are ongoing. As on 1.4.2005, the completion of ongoing gauge conversion

projects required an outlay of about Rs. 1000 crore. During the current year, an outlay of Rs. 256.91 crore has been provided for gauge conversion projects which includes Rs. 135.10 crore through Non-Budgetary Resources.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Doubling of Madurai-Dindigul by gauge conversion of existing metre gauge line into broad gauge has been taken up.

SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Sir, for an outlay of Rs. 1000 crores, only Rs. 256.91 crores have been allocated. With such a piecemeal allocation, projects cannot be completed on time. As many of the important routes, like the Tanjavur - Thiruvarur line, pass through rivers and streams, bridges need to be constructed. A lot of inconvenience is caused to the public.

Will the hon. Minister give the assurance that, at least, another Rs. 250 crores will be allocated during the current financial year?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the hon. Member has expressed the apprehension that the allocations now made do not match the requirements. I have already given the reply that for seven projects, the throw-forward balance is Rs. 1000 crore. On more than one occasion in this august House, I have mentioned how over 240 projects in India valued at about Rs. 47,000 crores are lying on the shelves for various reasons. We are trying to mobilise the resources.

Coming to the projects in Tamil Nadu, the seven projects are Katpadi-Vellore, Vriddhachalam-Salem, Villupuram-Thanjavur, Thanjavur-Thiruvarur, Trichy-Manamadurai, Madurai-Manamadurai and Tirunelveli-Tiruchendur. All these seven projects require about Rs. 1000 crore. We are trying to accommodate them. As and when the Budget allotment is made, which would allow mobilisation of resources, both within and outside the country, and also, whenever funds are made available by our own internal efforts on generations, we shall try to accommodate them. But I cannot commit whether this year we would be able to give Rs. 250 crore more.

SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Sir, the Madurai-Dindigul gauge conversion needs to be expedited, because this is the lifeline of the region. Will the hon. Minister tell the House as to how much money has been allocated so far and when this conversion is likely to be completed?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the Madurai-Dindigul section has been a bottleneck up till now with the result that a throughput enhancement has just not

been possible. Earlier, it was posed for World Bank funding. Now, because there is some problem in getting finance from the World Bank, we have taken the project out of that. And, out of our own Railway finances, we have sanctioned Rs. 103 crores for the project. Tenders have already been invited for minor bridges earthwork etc. For the Vaigai bridge alone we need to float the tender.

I would like to assure the hon. Member that this being a very important project, I would see to it that it is executed within the shortest possible time, at any rate, within two years.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister of Railways and the Minister of State for Railways are doing good job for developing railways in this country. But, I would like to submit that there is one project which is connecting Tamil Nadu, and Pondicherry-Tanjore line, Nagapattinam-Nagore, Vellankanni site, and Shanishwar temple at Karaikal. It has been approved, because it is a project which was decided at a time when Shri Jaffer Sharief was the Minister for Railways. Only 20 kms broad-gauge line has to be connected, which will cover all the temple town of Shanishwar, Nagore Durgah and Vellankanni Church. This project was decided earlier ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, come to your question.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: More than eight years have elapsed for 20 kms. line; therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister when he is going to complete the project.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, his question consists of two parts. One is, Trichy-Nagore line. We have already completed up to Tanjore. From Tanjore to Thiruvaroor, will be completed by next February. From Thiruvaroor to Nagore, again a branch line to Vellankanni, again by material-modification we are extending from Nagore to Karaikal. Now, having done that, this year, out of the capital fund, we are trying to allot some funds. I cannot assure him about the target date because we have not targeted anything on that. However, with the increase in allotment, perhaps, it is in the process of completion.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Nine years have elapsed.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, Thanjavur-Nagore extension is in the middle, because it came later. The other point is about connecting the Shanishwar

temple. After the UPA Government came into existence, we are now conducting a survey from Mayavaram to Karaikal *via* Shanishwar Temple. Once that survey is completed, we will think of sanctioning it, taking into account the economic feasibility and the other relevant factors.

Construction of godowns

*447. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of godowns and their storage capacity under the control of Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Central Warehousing Corporation in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to construct more godowns in the country during the Tenth Five Year Plan; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Food Corporation of India (FCI) owned a total of 543 covered storage godowns with a total capacity of 129.24 lakh MTs. as on 31st October, 2005. The State-wise details are given in the enclosed Statement-I. (*See* below)

The Central Warehousing Corporation has a total 497 covered storage godowns (owned and hired) with a total capacity of 101.79 lakh MTs as on 31st October, 2005. The State-wise details are given in enclosed Statement-II (*See* below)

(b) and (c) The year-wise storage godowns, alongwith capacity, constructed, under construction and, planned by the FCI and CWC during